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An Inaugural  
Dissertation on  
Rest

as a remedy in Diseases.

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admitted March 4th 1820

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## Dissertation &c

The consideration of Rest in a medical view is extremely interesting: its operation (if the phraseology may be admitted) is of importance, both in the prevention and cure of Diseases.

Not wishing to detract from the merits of any individual article of the *Maternis Medica*, I yet cannot help believing that very many of them are indebted for much of their celebrity to the care which is taken of patients during their supposed or real operation.

In relation to the *Modus operandi* of Rest it is - like Cold, to be regarded as having rather a negative than a positive agency; - Exercise is unquestionably a stimulus - hence its injurious effects in all inflammatory diseases; in asthenic diseases, exercise, when proportioned to the debilitated state of the body is salutary - but if too great, it induces

## Experiment 12

The comparison of the results of the experiment with the results of the experiment of the previous day is of great interest. It is the question of the nature of the stimulus of the motor system. The results of the experiment of the previous day show that the motor system is not a simple reflex system. It is a system which is capable of learning and of adapting itself to the conditions of the environment. The results of the experiment of the previous day show that the motor system is not a simple reflex system. It is a system which is capable of learning and of adapting itself to the conditions of the environment. The results of the experiment of the previous day show that the motor system is not a simple reflex system. It is a system which is capable of learning and of adapting itself to the conditions of the environment.

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debility and augments the disease: - In this respect then, exercise acts like all other stimulants; it being therefore a stimulus - Rest which is the negative of it, must act sedatively - and hence its use in all inflammatory disorders.

The good effects of Rest are obtained by keeping our patients confined to an horizontal posture - by the proper adaptation of splints and bandages - by the absence of every improper stimulus - Curved splints, in cases of disease in joints - formed so accurately as to fit the affected parts, and rendered comfortable by stuffing with carded wool, cotton, tow or flax: - the adaptation of tin boots in cases of inflamed ulcers on the legs, are valuable - not only as they prevent the motion of the muscles of the part, but as they also prevent the patient from rising & walking - Other apparatus often become proper - the particular circumstances of each case will readily suggest the proper articles to be used.

Surgically considered, Rest is of extreme importance

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without rest, all the other remedies for inflammation would be of little avail, it is indeed an indispensable ingredient in the antiphlogistic regimen - and as in the United States, the majority of diseases are managed exclusively by the antiphlogistic plan of treatment, it behooves us to be peculiarly careful to insist upon its advantages. - My regretted tutor the late Professor Dorsey, in commencing the consideration of the class Stimulants - observed - that in the proportions of one thousand to one, are the articles of the class Evacuants preferable to those of the Stimulants (don't note).

In all surgical diseases of the Head - rest is certainly one of our best remedies - to prevent inflammation and its consequences; a low diet - depletion - rest are indispensable. - Nature - always correct in the indications which she presents us for the cure of disease - prevents the circulation ~~from~~ of the blood from being carried on too rapidly in cases of Congestion of the Brain - the final cause of the languid circulation which succeeds a blow on the head,

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is probably the prevention of extravasation" (Gorsey's L. Surg)  
- as well to remove bad consequences after they have  
arisen, as to prevent them - the perseverance in the use  
of low diet and rest is necessary.

In the first stage of Concupion of the Brain, the  
best plan of procedure is to refrain altogether from action;  
- to do nothing at all; - to wait until the system has  
reacted; - to withhold stimulants, although they may  
appear to be indicated; - to trust to the efforts of  
nature to produce a reaction in the system; - and  
subsequently, after reaction has taken place, to treat  
the case by Venesection - low diet - purges - rest.

How could an inflamed eye ever be reco-  
vered, except by abstracting the stimulus of light  
and allowing that delicate organ to be kept at  
perfect rest? remaining in a dark room and  
at rest is essential to the well being of patients  
affected with ophthalmia: - it is equally important  
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needle or knife of the operator, - whether after the extraction of an opaque lens - after couching - after lacerating the texture of the lens or capsule - it is proper to restrict our patients from the use of their eyes.

In inflammation of the joints we should in vain look for a cure if we allowed our patients to take any exercise, - confinement to bed and the use of curved splints to keep the parts at rest, are highly serviceable. Sprains, bruises, almost all accidents to which we are liable, depend in a great measure upon rest for their ultimate removal.

Is inflammation seated in muscular parts? they should always be relaxed. - if on the posterior part of the thigh, the leg must be flexed and the thigh extended; in every case the greatest relaxation that the parts will admit of, is that which is best adapted to accelerate the cure: exceptions to this rule exist, in cases where anchylosis is suspected to be about to take place; here the most favourable position that can be chosen in order to allow the member to be of the greatest service, should be selected; if it be the elbow that is affected a flexed

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position should be preferred; for the leg a straight one.

In wounds, the treatment consists, 'after putting a stop to the hemorrhage, in placing the injured parts in a situation to be uninfluenced by air; if it be a simple incision, the sides are to be drawn together and kept so, in order that union may be effected; the effused blood being converted into living flesh. if the adjacent parts are injured and contused, rest is equally proper; a poultice is to be applied - the deadened parts are removed by the action of the absorbent vessels, granulations are produced, filling up the cavity of the wound, and replenishing the parts which had been removed, 'becoming bone, tendon, muscle or skin, according as the wound has been in any of these parts.' Dougl's El. Surg.

The great value of rest in gun shot wounds, is illustrated by Mr. Hunter in the case of four Frenchmen who had nothing done for them for four days after receiving their wounds, as they had hid themselves in a farm house all that time," and when they were brought to the hospital their wounds were only

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deeped superficially, and they all got well" (Hunter, "it is contrary to all the rules of common surgery, founded on our knowledge of the animal economy, to enlarge wounds simply as such: no wound let it be ever so small, should be made larger, except when preparatory to something else." (Hunter).

Fractures of bones are cured by the deposition of bony matter from the arteries in the vicinity of the injury; if rest was not enjoined and strictly enforced, though the uniting medium would certainly be deposited, yet the fractured extremities of the bones would unite with the limb distorted and disfigured.

In fractures - although the muscles cannot be permitted to remain permanently contracted - in consequence of this not allowing the broken ends of the bones to unite properly - yet no violent effort to extend them is desirable or proper: permanent and long continued extension must be insisted upon, and carried into effect by mild means - gradually from day to day lightening the extending hands, and - as it were - coaxing the muscles to cease



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their contraction - and allowing Nature free and unrestrained indulgence, in order that she may accomplish her designs. there is often however great judgment required to know exactly when and how to interfere, in cases which demand perhaps little or nothing more than rest to render them harmless.

Does inflammation exist to a considerable degree in cases of Fracture? - all bandages must be omitted: does it come on after the application of the dressings? - they must be laid aside.

The treatment of Dislocations consists in reducing the luxated extremities of the bones to their natural situations, by means of force, properly applied; to prevent however a recurrence of the dislocation it is absolutely necessary that the limbs affected should be kept perfectly quiet: otherwise, a repetition of the luxation will probably take place, and require all the means in our power to produce a reduction.

Bloodletting as a remedy in dislocations is of the first importance; its introduction into practice, carried

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to the extent that is demanded to insure success to its application, is one of the many great improvements which surgery has received from the present Professor of Anatomy in this University - it is beneficial in exact proportion to the rest which it affords the muscles surrounding the dislocated bones, and whose forcible contraction prevents their replacement; hence the complete relaxation that is produced by the remedy when fainting ensues is the most favorable that can possibly happen: - continued nausea kept up by small doses of tartarized antimony, acts similarly; it produces a very great prostration of muscular power.

In cases of dislocations, as in fractures, where great inflammation and tumefaction have come on before the surgeon is called, it is absolutely necessary that the parts remain undisturbed, in order that the inflammation may subside.

The complexity of the ancient apparatus for performing surgical operations, originated in the ignorance of the practitioners of the times of the powers of nature in curing diseases - to

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the discoveries of that great man John Hunter, in relation to the process instituted by Nature, in restoring parts to their former usefulness and elegance. we are indebted for the simplicity which at present prevails: "reduction of the number of instruments to be used in an operation, and an extreme simplicity and plainness in those which may be required, are part of the merit of modern Surgery." (Pott.)

Hæmorrhage can more frequently be restrained by abstraction from excise than by any other single means. Position is of great advantage in hæmorrhage, the bleeding vessels should always be placed in an elevated position, their action is thereby diminished and the hæmorrhage is consequently checked. If the hæmorrhage is from the back of the hand, it should be elevated above the head, in many cases has the Physick succeeded in restraining bleeding by this management; if it is from the nose, the head should be held erect or thrown backwards.

Zeal directed by ignorance, frequently commits errors of great moment to the welfare and even to the

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lives, of those committed to its charge: Officiousness in a surgeon is the source of much greater evils than negligence itself. the patient, if deserted by his physician, is left to the salutary guidance of nature, the operations of her inscrutable agency produces effects which if not counteracted by art, are highly beneficial: even large arteries occasionally heal after having been wounded, and although, as a general rule it is proper to take up every bleeding, vessel of magnitude, yet the following case proves the possibility of their doing well if left alone, "a large artery, probably the Femoral, was opened by a small sword, and although the stream of blood was at first very alarming, yet it soon ceased, and did not return, until a surgeon forced his probe into the vessel, and the patient died of hemorrhage" (Dewey's, El. Surg.) Dr Dewey adds "there is great reason to believe that the patient would have recovered, but for the imprudent interference of his surgeon." — had he been left at rest, his life had been preserved.

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was recommended by Dr. Physick, and persisted in, in the Philadelphia Almshouse with great benefit, in inflammation of the legs, and indeed in every case of inflammation seated in the lower extremities; it is highly proper that such patients should be rigidly confined to their beds.

To Dr. Physick we also owe the introduction of a mode of practice truly efficient and valuable in Morbus Coxarius, it consists in the repeated purging of the bowels with cream of tartar & jalap, and the absolute rest of the hip joint by means of a canvas splint.

In cases of Aneurism rest is of importance, if in aneurism which cannot be operated upon, it is almost our only resort.

After every capital operation in Surgery, the patient is to be confined to bed and kept at rest, Opium is frequently administered, and by its anodyne powers is capable of affording great relief.

That hideous disease pulmonary Consumption,

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which appears to be almost necessarily fatal, consists of  
ulcers of the lungs; could we by any means in our power  
adapt an apparatus to keep these organs free from  
action, and yet allow the circulation of the blood and  
respiration to be continued, we should perhaps more  
frequently than we do at present succeed in curing  
that disease. Dissections prove to us that ulcers of  
the lungs are capable of healing, cicatrices being found  
in them in numberless instances; - the lodgment of balls,  
in the substance of the lungs, remaining there for years,  
also affords a proof of the powers of the lungs, in  
taking on the curative process in cases of ulceration;  
the misfortune in phthisis is, that while one ulcer  
is healing, two or three others are forming - and which  
at length involving the whole substance of the lungs,  
produce a fatal termination: by rest, ulcers in  
other parts of the body are allowed to heal, if the same  
favorable state could be retained in these organs, why  
should they not be healed as readily?

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the ribs, avoiding the intercostal artery and a sin can-  
na or probe be introduced, in order to permit one lung  
to collapse? the practicability of continuing respiration  
by means of one lung, is shown in cases of gun shot  
wounds, where a free passage made by a ball into the  
substance of the lungs and adhesions forming, the wounds  
healed as in other situations. Mr. Hunter even supposed  
that it was possible to habituate ourselves to continue  
respiration with one side of the thorax while the other  
should remain at rest. his words are "I have often  
thought it a great pity, that we do not accustom our-  
selves to move one side of the thorax independent  
of the other, as we now habit move one eyelid inde-  
pendent of the other" and again, Mr. Hunter says, "I  
have seen people breathe pretty freely who have had  
but one side to expand". On Gun Shot Wounds. &c.

When the intractable nature of this formidable  
disease is considered, it may not perhaps be deemed  
visionary to expect that even such a remedy as that  
which I have proposed may at length be resorted to.

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- condemned to witness the inefficacy of our medicines, it is our duty to resort to every means which affords the least prospect of arresting the ravages of disease and death.

Rest excites the action of the lymphatic system - as exercise invariably accelerates the circulation of the blood, and in a disordered state of any of the functions of the heart or stomach, or any of the vital organs; produces not only an increased, but a febrile condition of the pulse - and as the integrity of the absorbing apparatus is always impaired in a pretty exact ratio to the removal from the healthy standard of the circulatory system - I hence infer, that in order to gain any advantages in the treatment of those diseases whose removal depend upon the due activity of the lymphatics, we must attend particularly, to keep the arterial system in a state of comparative rest; - this can be effected, among other means, by abstracting from exercise; - to excite the absorbents we must apply sedatives to the blood-vessels: Dropsy; glandular diseases generally; though not curable by rest, are essentially benefitted by it.

In inflammatory fevers it is essential that our

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patients be kept at rest, the stimulus of exertion uniformly aggravating every symptom: not less in the directly opposite condition of the system - that is - in the lowest grade of typhus fever, is rest indispensable; - in many cases have patients in the Philadelphia almshouse died in the act of walking from their bed to a closer stool.

During convalescence from disease, the visits of friends and acquaintances - by depriving the patient of that rest which is essential to his complete recovery - are productive of much injury - hence also, the wards of hospitals and poor houses, are ill calculated to accelerate the recovery of patients who have been very low.

The stimulus of light, of noise &c. is also of great disservice: the improper use of articles of indigestible food when recovering from an acute attack of disease, is a frequent cause of relapse - by preventing the necessary rest of that important organ, the stomach.